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Page 2

CONSUMER TIME

TRANSPORTATION OF FOOD

NETWORK: NBC

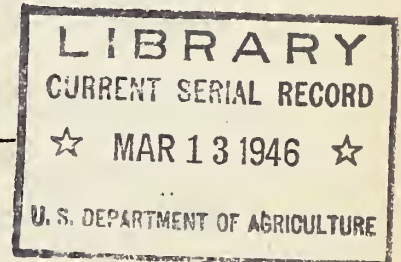
DATE: March 2, 1946

ORIGIN: WRC

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(Produced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture...this script is for reference only...and may not be broadcast without special permission. The title CONSUMER TIME is restricted to network broadcast of the program....presented for more than twelve years in the interest of consumers.)

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN TILL
2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!
3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER
4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes, the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the National Broadcasting Company. And here are Mrs. Freyman and Johnny.
5. JOHN: Today, Mrs. Freyman...we're going to hear an important story...
6. FREYMAN: And a thrilling one, too, Johnny!
7. JOHN: It's the story of what happens to the food you buy...from the time it leaves the farmer's fields...'til it gets to your pantry shelf! We're going to tell about new ways of transporting food...and about new kinds of packages and containers you'll be finding at your grocer's...
8. SOUND: TRAIN AND WHISTLE SNEAKS IN BELOW WITHOUT PAUSE FOR SOUND.  
HOLD UNDER WITH INTERMITTANT WHISTLE.
9. FREYMAN: So suppose we begin...by tracing the journey of fresh vegetables...carried by freight car from the far West...to the markets of the East.
10. JOHN: Let's be on our way, and we're heading East out of California's rich Imperial Valley...heading out with a trainload of fresh vegetables.

11. FREYMAN: Carloads of crisp green lettuce...and crates of fresh carrots and other perishable vegetables...newly picked, beginning the long journey...
12. JOHN: And the journey is over mountains, and across deserts...through heat and cold...lumbering through the night; traveling day after day.
13. FREYMAN: Yet...isn't it true that these vegetables which have traveled looking thousands of miles...are often more fresh/and crisp and inviting on my grocer's shelves...than the ones picked from nearby farms?
14. JOHN: They're very likely to be, Mrs. Freyman. Because vegetables which have to travel that distance...are packed in ice; in refrigerator cars. And even though you may get them two weeks after they were picked, they may easily be fresher than the newly picked vegetables from right nearby.
15. SOUND TRAIN SNEAKS OUT UNDER
16. FREYMAN: And that's just because of the ice, isn't it.
17. JOHN: Yes, Mrs. Freyman. Ice keeps them from wilting and decaying and losing their food value. We all know that. But we seldom realize what a difference a relatively simple thing like a refrigerator car has made...in the food you get...and where that food is grown...and the condition it's in when it comes to you.
18. FREYMAN: I suppose if it weren't for refrigerator cars on trains, there wouldn't be many fruits or vegetables grown in California, for instance.
19. JOHN: No indeed. Farming in the far West, and in many other states would still be primitive. And there wouldn't be any big meat packing industry in the Middle West. Or any such development as the great Yakima Valley in Washington...or the great farmlands in Florida's Everglades...or the Winter Garden along the Rio Grande. All of these areas depend on refrigerator cars to transport their fruit and vegetables across the country.



20. FREYMAN: And the refrigerator car's been invented only a short time, hasn't it, Johnny...?
21. JOHN: Not more than seventy years.
22. FREYMAN: Think of that...
23. JOHN: And now...let's continue our trip across the country...with our load of fresh vegetables from the Imperial Valley...
24. SOUND: TRAIN COMES IN UNDER
25. JOHN: You know, there's a lot more behind this story of getting fresh carrots and lettuce to your table, Mrs. Freyman...than you might think...
26. SOUND: TRAIN UP WITH LOUD WHISTLE, CONTINUE UNDER AND COME TO STOP UNDER LAST SENTENCE OF FOLLOWING.
27. JOHN: Things like this...sometime happen. Crossing the hot, desert of Arizona...our freight train with its perishable load has come to a sudden stop. There's trouble up the line somewhere. And the cars have to wait out there in the blistering desert sun. The brakeman and the conductor climb down from the caboose to look things over. Let's see what we can learn from them, on this part of our story...the transportation of food.
28. BRAKEMAN: I guess we're due to sit out here for another few hours, Joe.
29. CONDUCTOR: Looks like you're right. Out here in the furnace. It's the middle of winter...and
30. BRAKEMAN: /it must be about 100 in the shade...
31. CONDUCTOR: Yeah. If you can find the shade.
32. BRAKEMAN: It's times like this I could be jealous of a vegetable. Of one of those heads of lettuce we've got up ahead there...
33. CONDUCTOR: They have it easy all right. Covered up with ice. Ice in the bunkers...cracked ice blown over top of 'em.

34. BRAKEMAN: I'm half a mind to crawl in with 'em myself, and cool off.
35. CONDUCTOR: No too, but there's no room. They're all packed solid...  
Say, you know, hot as it is out here...I always wonder why  
the ice in those cars doesn't just melt away.
36. BRAKEMAN: Not a chance. I was delayed once with a load, for almost  
two days, in a place hotter'n this. And the stuff was fresh  
and sweet like right out of the garden when we got back East.
37. CONDUCTOR: Sure. Our load will be, too. But they're going to have to stop  
at Kansas city to re-ice those cars...instead of waiting  
to get to Chicago like the orders say.
38. BRAKEMAN: It's quite a sight, you know, Joe. I like to see 'em ice up  
these cars. Long as I've been a brakeman, I never get tired  
of watching the cars pull up to the siding there and see the  
boys take out that big hose, and blow the snow & ice all  
around those vegetables. Pretty as a mint julep, when they  
get through.
39. CONDUCTOR: You always were one to look on the poetic side of things. To  
me it's just an icing station. And another inconvenience.
40. BRAKEMAN: What are we carrying on this load anyhow, Joe?
41. CONDUCTOR: Besides lettuce, we got a lot of carrots and some oranges...  
avacados...and...
42. BRAKEMAN: Which'd you rather be carrying...passengers, or vegetables?
43. CONDUCTOR: You're getting touched by the heat.
44. BRAKEMAN: No, I'm serious. You're a conductor; you've done both.
45. CONDUCTOR: This stuff is much worse'n passengers. At least people  
can get on and off a train by themselves: and they all like  
the same general temperature.
46. BRAKEMAN: That's right. You gotta see that lettuce doesn't get too cold,  
and you can't let cantaloupes get too warm.

47. CONDUCTOR: Yeah, and the oranges can't get below freezing. And with potatoes you have to open the hatchen when the weather's too hot; and close 'em when it's too cold... Give me people any time.
48. BRAKEMAN: But you know, when you get to thinking about it, vegetables are like people in a lot of ways.
49. CONDUCTOR: Look, friend, I'm in no mood for poetry, like I told you. Here we are stuck out in the desert with a hot box, and the temperature about 100, and you have to go on about...
50. BRAKEMAN: But I'll bet you never thought about it. Look, vegetables breathe in oxygen, and breathe out carbon dioxide. Just like people.
51. CONDUCTOR: I'm fascinated.
52. BRAKEMAN: And they feed on the same things we do.
53. CONDUCTOR: Is that so, now...
54. BRAKEMAN: Sure. When you pick a carrot, it doesn't have anything to feed off of, so it starts eating what it's stored up. In other words, it eats a vegetable...even though it happens to be itself. And the hotter the weather is, the faster it uses itself up. Didn't you know that?
55. CONDUCTOR: I never took time to think about it.
56. BRAKEMAN: Didn't you even know why we got ice in those cars up ahead.
57. CONDUCTOR: Yes. I always figured it was to keep the vegetables cold.
58. BRAKEMAN: Because...when they're ice cold like that, they don't use themselves up so fast. Get ripe. And rot. You take a peach. An ordinary peach about as warm as 60 degrees will get as hot as 85 degrees, just while it's ripening.
59. CONDUCTOR: Hear the brakeman who turned into a professor.



60. BRAKEMAN: Now you take a carload...a whole carload of peaches...they start out at one temperature...and they'll heat up the whole car, just by getting ripe.
61. CONDUCTOR: Is this on the level, Mack?
62. BRAKEMAN: Sure it is. That's why a lot of these fruit and vegetable guys...cool the stuff off before they even put it in a freight car.
63. CONDUCTOR: Because they warm up while they ripen.
64. BRAKEMAN: That's it...and the pre-cooling takes the field-head out of the vegetables.
65. CONDUCTOR: Here I watch all this stuff being done, and never thought about it one way or another.
66. BRAKEMAN: There's a lot to it, when you get to pondering on it. Like how they put salt with the ice in some cars, and not in others.
67. CONDUCTOR: Oh well, I know about that. Salt makes the ice melt faster, and makes the car colder.
68. BRAKEMAN: Yes, and with a carload of tomatoes, they don't want 'em to get too cold...so they don't put salt in.
69. CONDUCTOR: In fact, for some things they use ice that's warmer. I always thought ice was all the same temperature. Just plain ice-cold.
70. BRAKEMAN: No sir. Some ice gets way below freezing.
71. CONDUCTOR: Yeah. Well...all this talking isn't getting us anywhere, out here in the middle of Arizona. I'm going to take a walk up the line and see if everything's O.K.
72. BRAKEMAN: I'll stick back here in the caboose. Seems like we ought to get moving before too long.
73. CONDUCTOR: I hope we do. But it ain't bothering any heads...of lottuce!
74. SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE...SHORT TOOTS OF HALTED FREIGHT...ONCE AGAIN...

FADING.



75. FREYMAN: Well, Johnny. The brakeman and the conductor on that freight train...told us some interesting things about refrigerator cars. What happens next, on our story of food transportation?
76. JOHN: Well, finally the train moves on. And if it's been out in that hot desert too long, we know that they've got to stop at an icing station pretty soon, to get some more ice for those perishable fruits and vegetables...
77. FREYMAN: "Warmer ice" for some things...and colder ice for others; right, Johnny?
78. JOHN: Sure...and salt with the ice to make it colder, if they're shipping frozen foods, for instance.
79. FREYMAN: I never dreamed that shipping vegetables could be so complicated.
80. JOHN: Now...suppose we pick up our story...the trainload of food moves Eastward...and let's say that it goes into Philadelphia. There we find inspectors everywhere, seeing if the fruits and vegetables have all arrived fresh...and in good condition. We'll follow some of this cargo...which has been loaded off the refrigerator car into a big transport truck...
81. FREYMAN: All right, Johnny.
82. JOHN: The driver and his helper...are sitting up in the cab, as the truck rolls along the broad highway. We'll hear their part of the story. ...
83. SOUND: TRUCK UNDER
84. BOY: Say, wouldja mind explaining me one thing?
85. DRIVER: What's that?
86. BOY: Here they go to all the trouble to ship these carrots or whatever we got back there...they go to all the trouble to ship it in by train from out West. And then unload it all off into trucks like this. And we take it over to Pineville. There's a train to Pineville. Why'dt they leave it on the train?

87. DRIVER: I should take my time explaining you that.
88. BOY: I got a right to be curious.
89. DRIVER: Well, you see kid, there aren't so many people in Pineville. Pineville ain't such a big place. So what would they do if a freight-car load of carrots pulled in there, one fine day? <sup>nothing but</sup> Everybody'd have to eat/carrots for two weeks. And folks in Norris Center wouldn't have any. So, in Philadelphia they got all these trucks and they split up the freight-car load, and spread it out to all the little towns by truck.
90. BOY: Yep, I see...
91. DRIVER: Now we get it there fast, and the ice that's still in those lettuce crates...doesn't hardly have a chance to melt, before it's in the market. at Pinesville.
92. BOY: Sure.
93. DRIVER: You know, it's a big system, Kid. I look at it like a long distance telephone cable that goes across the country. There's a big cable all wound together with a lot of wires, first. Then, one by one, it all breaks down into a lot of single little lines that lead out to the various local points.
94. BOY: Yes. I getcha.
95. DRIVER: It's all part of the system. This morning we'll get these vegetables delivered...and by afternoon, all the housewives will wheel in their market baskets...and grab the stuff up. Fresh carrots and lettuce...traveled about 2,000 miles. What do you think of that?
96. SOUND: TRUCK UP AND OUT
97. FREYMAN: And the food finally arrives at my neighborhood store. Is that the end of the story, Johnny?
98. JOHN: Not quite.

99. FREYMAN: No!

100. JOHN: A very important part of the story!..has to do with the packages your food comes in.

101. FREYMAN: Packages...yes. But we're talking about fresh vegetables... not about canned or frozen foods.

102. JOHN: I know. But now wait a minute. Have you heard of "pre-packaging"?

103. FREYMAN: Pre-packaging? What's that?

104. JOHN: Well, it won't be long before you'll be finding more fresh fruits and vegetables...all done up in attractive packages. Peas, beans, spinach, cauliflower...and many other vegetables ...will be on sale at your grocer's already packaged in convenient sizes...

105. FREYMAN: You mean instead of being loose in a bin, or on a table?

106. JOHN: Sure...potatoes in 10-pound sacks, with a cellophane window for you to see the size and quality. And other vegetables will have the incredible stalks and dried, wilted leaves all stripped away. Take spinach for instance. If that's packaged all ready for you to use, probably half of it has been thrown away...you know, the tough stems and old leaves.

107. FREYMAN: But won't it cost me more...to have fresh vegetables done up in packages?

108. JOHN: Would you like to hear what the Department of Agriculture says about that?

109. FREYMAN: Yes indeed.

110. JOHN: Well, they say that this pre-packaging actually protects the vegetable or fruit in such a way that there's a definite saving for the consumer. They say:



111. MAN: Pre-packaging...protects against pilfering all along the line. There's protection against dirt, which gives the consumer a more satisfactory purchase.
112. MAN TWO: There is protection against loss of moisture and weight, permitting the product to arrive at your store in a fresh and attractive condition.
113. MAN: There is the saving that comes from preventing products from being handled by customers doing their sorting. This saving is substantial with fruits and vegetables that bruise easily.
114. FREYMAN: Well, you know, Johnny...we housewives are very interested in the kind of packages our food comes in. For instance...we know there are going to be a lot of new developments in food containers, now that the war's over, but we're pretty particular about what kinds we get.
115. JOHN: That's very wise.
116. FREYMAN: For instance, we don't want to pay extra for a flossy package. We'll continue to buy the best value.
117. JOHN: That's right. And in the new packaging, food packers are taking that very much into consideration.
118. FREYMAN: And we certainly want to be sure we see what we're getting.
119. JOHN: Yes, and that's why so many more foods will be packaged in transparent bags...or bags with a cellophane window. You can tell about the quality then.
120. FREYMAN: Then there's another thing we want in our new package.
121. JOHN: What's that?
122. FREYMAN: We want food in convenient size containers. One or two-pound bags and boxes, easy to carry.



123. JOHN: Well, according to the Department of Agriculture, food packers are taking that into consideration too. Many homemakers, instead of using the old-time big tins marked "flour" and "sugar" and so forth, on the pantry shelf...are using the commercial package. It's often easier to handle, and takes less space.
124. FREYMAN: I use the manufacturer's package, usually...
125. JOHN: Then there's something else that's being taken into consideration in new food packages.
126. FREYMAN: What Johnny?
127. JOHN: Well, you know, many of the new apartments, and prefabricated houses, are quite small. There's a limited space for food storage. People will be making more purchases in small quantities.
128. FREYMAN: So...there'll be more demand for food in small packages!
129. JOHN: That's according to the Agriculture Department estimates. And here's something else they say...
130. MAN: The war drew thousands of women out of their homes and into jobs. If, as some estimates indicate, a large percentage of these women continue working outside of the home, there will be demands from them for packaged foods which make possible the quick preparation of meals.
131. MAN TWO: Pre-cooked dishes in frozen forms, and even frozen whole meals in balanced quantities and kinds of foods, will be relied on to help bridge the space between the market and the dinner table.
132. JOHN: Dr. F. L. Thomsen, of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics said recently:

133. MAN: "It seems to me that many economists have a tendency to look down their noses at modern packaging, as merely a useless frill which adds to marketing costs. It is true that some packaging adds little to the utility of the product... But it also is great assistance to low-cost self service methods of retailing; helps to minimize spoilage and handling...and makes possible sanitary conditions...which we would appreciate better after a visit to some countries where the packaging of foods is still in a rudimentary stage. It might be said that modern packaging constitutes one of the biggest advances in food marketing."
134. JOHN: And now, Mrs. Freyman...that's about all we have time for on CONSUMER TIME's story of food transportation...and new methods of packaging. Later on, we'll talk about air transportation of foods...and also about what's new in frozen foods.
135. FREYMAN: And in the meantime...
136. JOHN: In the meantime...next week we're going to talk about your 1946 garden...which won't exactly be called a Victory Garden... but those vegetables will still be very necessary.
137. FREYMAN: That's right, Johnny. So...next week we're going to give some advice to gardeners...from the Department of Agriculture.
138. FREY: We'll tell about insecticides...and weed killers...about what's new in flowers and vegetables. And just generally try to help you plan your garden this spring.
139. JOHN: So be with us then for another edition of...
139. SOUND: CASH REGISTER
140. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME.
141. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER.

142. ANNCR:

CONSUMER TIME, written by Christine Kempton, is presented by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations. It comes to you from Washington, D.C.

This is NBC, the National Broadcasting Company.

